

Message Text

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46

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 PM-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SPC-03 DRC-01

(ISO) W

----- 065594

R 101230Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY LOME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7162

INFO AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USDAO/ABIDJAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L L O M E 0082

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TO, DM

SUBJ: TOGO-DAHOMAY HELICOPTER INCIDENT

REFS: A) COTONOU 0031; B) LOME 0040 (NOTAL); C) LOME 0052 (NOTAL)

1. WHILE TOGOLESE MEDIA HAVE NOT RPT NOT MENTIONED IMPOUNDING OF EYADEMA'S HELICOPTER BY DAHOMEY (REFTELS), AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE (AFP) LOME CORRESPONDENT FILED STORY JANUARY 8 GIVING TOGOLESE REACTION OF "ASTONISHMENT" TO DAHOMEAN VERSION OF HELICOPTER INCIDENT AS HEARD HERE OVER RADIO DAHOMEY'S "VOIX DE LA REVOLUTION." NOTING THAT NO RPT NO STATEMENT IS EXPECTED FROM EYADEMA, AFP CLAIMS "VERY WELL INFORMED SOURCE" HAS PRESENTED IT WITH VERSION OF FACTS "WHICH SEEM TO DIVERGE A LITTLE BIT" FROM DAHOMEAN STATEMENT.

2. TOGOLESE SOURCE TOLD AFP IT WAS ONLY BECAUSE KEREKOU HIMSELF SENT DARBOUX THAT EYADEMA RECEIVED HIM, AS HE HAD ALREADY DONE IN LOME ON NOVEMBER 22 AND 26, AND FOR SAME REASON EYADEMA THOUGHT IT USEFUL TO SEND DARBOUX BACK BY HELICOPTER FROM LAMA KARA TO DJOUGOU BEFORE DARK. FRENCH MILITARY PILOT WHO REGULARLY FLIES HELICOPTER, TOOK DARBOUX, ONLY PASSENGER ON BOARD, THERE AND LANDED WITHOUT DIFFICULTY NEAR MARKET;
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SWITCHED OFF ROTORS WHEN HE SAW CROWD APPROACHING, TO

AVOID ACCIDENT. DAHOMEAN POLICEMAN (NOT "POPULATION")
THEN TOLD PILOT HE COULD NOT DEPART. DARBOUX AND PILOT FIRST
HELD IF DJOUGOU, THEN AT NATITINGOU, THEN ON JANUARY 6
REACHED COTONOU AND WERE HELD UNDER HOUSE ARREST.

3. "DIPLOMATIC SOURCE" (PRESUMABLY FRENCH) TOLD AFP FONMINS
MET ON BORDER AND PCOBLEM APPEARED SOLVED, BUT JANUARY 4-6
WERE HOLIDAYS AND NOTHING WAS DONE. ONLY ON JANUARY 8
WAS FRENCH PILOT RELEASED, AFTER BEING PREVENTED FROM CONTACTING
FRENCH EMBASSY OR GOT FOR SIX DAYS; HE RETURNED TO LOME WITH
"SENIOR OFFICER" OF TOGOLESE MILITARY WHO WENT TO COTONOU TO
GET HIM. TOGO SOURCES STRESSED TO AFP THAT IT WAS NOT FIRST
TIME THAT SAME HELICOPTER AND UAME PILOT HAD CARRIED
DAHOMAN VIPS TO DJOUGOU. WITHOUT WISHING TO AGGRAVATE
SITUATION, TOGOLESE "REGRET NEVERTHELESS NEWS REPORT THAT HAS
COME BACK TO IT FROM OTHER SIDE OF MONO, RIVER BOUNDARY."

4. FRENCH AMBASSADOR CONFIRMED TO AMBASSADOR LAST NIGHT HELICOPTER
PILOT HAD BEEN RETURNED BUT APPARENTLY HELICOPTER NOT BACK
ALTHOUGH EXPECTED BE RELEASED 10 JANUARY.
DICKINSON

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